



KC-46

ARP Application - Kanawha County

Status: Active

Date Created: Sep 22, 2021

Applicant

Allison Smith
asmith@montgomerywv.gov
321 Fourth Ave
Montgomery, WV 25136
717-449-2454

Certification

Digital Signature

Allison Smith
09/22/2021

Contact Information

Organization Name

City of Montgomery

Address

321 Fourth Ave

Website (if applicable)

N/A

Phone Number

304-442-5181

Email Address

asmith@montgomerywv.gov

Project Summary

1. Brief description of the proposal

The City of Montgomery is submitting this proposal for funding that supports a broadband engineering plan and initial construction of a fiber optic backbone with future plans of expansion to offer fiber optic internet service to residents and businesses.

2. Purpose and key anticipated outcomes

Establishing core broadband infrastructure enhances Montgomery's resilience during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Broadband will help the city attract remote workers and meet needs associated with the tourism industry. Additionally the service will be priced around the demographics of the area with low income services in mind.

3. Individuals or communities served

Anyone who lives, works, or visits Montgomery will benefit from broadband.

4. How the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated this request

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Montgomery understood, more than ever, the need for high-speed internet access. Without broadband, students struggled to stay present and engaged. We are excited about this opportunity to build back better.

5. Amount of funding requested

1,800,000

6. Amount of any bids or cost estimates received to date, if applicable

1,800,000

7a. Amount of matching funds raised or committed by your organization

0

7b. Source of matching funds raised or committed by your organization

0

8. How ARP funds, if awarded, will be used

We are requesting \$1.5 million to lay core fiber and \$300,000 for an engineering plan that covers multiple phases of broadband expansion in Montgomery. We consider the installation of core fiber to be Phase 1 of Montgomery's broadband expansion project. Ervin Cable, an experienced fiber optic deployment contractor, provided initial estimates for this project. If awarded, funds would be used to 1) pay for an engineering plan that involves multiple phases of broadband expansion and 2) the installation of the core broadband backbone in Montgomery.

9. How long it will take you to complete the project if awarded funding

If awarded funding, Phase 1 is estimated to be completed with 2-3 years while anticipating delays based on currently seen COVID shortages in materials and labor.

Proposal Details

1. Please describe the problem or need which your project seeks to address

Without affordable broadband, it is challenging to support business and attract visitors. The City of Montgomery is working to improve outdoor recreation infrastructure, which includes much more than trails or boat launches. Reliable, fast internet access promotes connectivity and safety to visitors as well as help increase internet connectivity for low income households.

2. Please describe goals and expected outcomes of your proposal.

Montgomery is located 40 minutes from the New River Gorge National Park and lies along the Midland Trail (Route 60), a scenic highway. As the city attracts new people to the area, broadband is an essential service that visitors will expect. Furthermore, the city seeks to install broadband to improve connectivity for all community members. If funding is received, Montgomery will be able to lay fiber across the city, providing a “tree trunk” that can be expanded in future phases. Phase 1 will connect the following properties: Montgomery City Hall, Upper Kanawha Valley Economic Development Corporation, Tabit Building, Montgomery Community Center, Montgomery Sanitary Board Lift Stations, Montgomery Fishing Pier, Ranger Scientific Main, Ranger Scientific downtown, Former Montgomery City Hall, Montgomery Park, Montgomery Sanitary Plant, and the Montgomery Fire Department.

3. Please provide your project timeline

If funded, Phase 1 is estimated to be fully implemented within 2-3 years.

4. Please provide your project's total proposed budget.

Our total proposed budget is \$1.8 million. This includes a \$300,000 engineering plan that accounts for multiple phases of broadband expansion and a \$1.5 installation for Phase 1 which would be the core backbone that future phases would branch out from.

5. Please list any partners in this proposal, and the partner's role and your relationship with them.

None at the current time; however, with community driven fiber deployments, the goal will be to interconnect with neighboring cities and middle mile partners nearby. At this time, the scope of this project is limited to the jurisdiction of the city of Montgomery.

6. Please describe your plan for sustainability of the project or initiative after the grant award has been exhausted.

Broadband in Montgomery would be considered a city utility. Thus, the city will be responsible for maintenance. As customers are brought online, they would be paying a recurring monthly bill for service. This income would be used for maintenance, administrative, and technical fees moving forward.

Organization Information

1. Please provide your organization's mission statement.

The City of Montgomery Planning Commission created the following Vision Statement for the City's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan: “Montgomery is a historic, welcoming community nestled between the Allegheny Mountains and along the Kanawha River. Our community provides convenient access to recreation and tourism, while serving as the regional hub for business and educational opportunities, health care, and public transportation. Our rich diversity provides a haven for artisans and entrepreneurs.”

2. Describe the history of your organization, tell us about your current programs and activities

Montgomery sits in the heart of southern West Virginia. Home to about 1,600 community members, the city prides itself on our rich history and natural assets. Montgomery lies among the Appalachian Mountains, and the Kanawha River slowly winds through the city. Montgomery is part of the larger Upper Kanawha Valley region, an area of West Virginia that has experienced the impact of a declining coal industry. The city was also impacted by the exodus of West Virginia University

Institute of Technology in 2017; a study completed by the West Virginia University Bureau of Business & Economic Research estimated a negative economic impact of approximately \$15 million on Fayette County, due to the relocation of WVU Tech. Despite these challenges, the City is rebuilding a sustainable economy that relies on natural assets like the area's rivers and mountains.

Tourism and outdoor recreation are growing industries in West Virginia. In 2021, the New River Gorge officially became the United States' newest national park. The New River Gorge National Park is less than 30 miles from Montgomery; the City is considered a Gateway Community for the newly designated National Park. Planning for ATV and hiking trails, lodging, and new business has begun. Montgomery, with the help of local leaders, is ready to turn vision into reality.

Montgomery is governed by a mayor and city council. The City is supported by municipal several boards, such as the Parks and Recreation Committee, Beautification Committee, and Finance Committee. In recent years, Montgomery has been in the spotlight for effective cost reduction and capacity building through partnerships with the neighboring city, Smithers.

In 2018, the Upper Kanawha Valley Strategic Initiatives Council was created. The UKVSIC is the first entity of its kind in West Virginia; the City of Montgomery is one of the UKVSIC's founding members. The SIC is a unique, intergovernmental body that promotes joint solutions to the mutual challenges. Recently, the SIC has absorbed the Midland Trail Scenic Highway Association, another example of the ways in which capacity is increased through joint efforts.

3. Please describe three significant accomplishments of your organization.

The City of Montgomery has experienced significant accomplishments in recent years. Under the leadership of Mayor Greg Ingram, Montgomery has seen new entities and business locate in the city, such as Mountaineer Challenge Academy South and Ranger Scientific. Montgomery was awarded a grant, through the Land Water Conservation Fund, to install a public fishing pier. Additionally, Smithers and Montgomery worked together to form the Upper Kanawha Valley Strategic Initiatives Council (UKVSIC). The two cities have coordinated ways to reduce costs and maximize outcomes. The cities have both a shared Sanitary Department Technician and Code Enforcement Officer. The cities' Police Mutual Aid Agreement promotes support and backup among police officers. Finally, the cities hired an Extension Agent (via a partnership with West Virginia State University) who manages grants, builds connections, and supports city activities. In addition to sharing employees, Montgomery and Smithers share heavy equipment such as lift trucks and garbage packers. In short, the communities have each other's backs and step up when the other is in need of assistance. Smithers and Montgomery jointly received a \$40,000 Cultivate WV Grant through the WV Community Development Hub and was also awarded the WV Municipal League's 2021 Cost Reduction/Savings Award.


4. Please list your Owner(s), Board of Directors, senior staff members, or other key members of your organization:

Mayor Greg Ingram; IT Specialist Thomas Baker; Office Manager Angela Tackett; UKV Extension Agent Allison Smith. Montgomery City Council Members: Johnny Colagrosso, Roger D. Landers, Fred Lockard, Shawn Malhotra, Les Thomas.


5. Please list the staff involved with this project and describe their roles and responsibilities:

Mayor Greg Ingram; Director of IT, Thomas Baker; Office Manager Angela Tackett; UKV Extension Agent Allison Smith; and Aaron Morrison, Region Manager, Ervin Cable.


Cash flow statement for applicant's most recent fiscal year

 Montgomery Cash Flow.pdf
Uploaded by Allison Smith on Sep 22, 2021 at 3:35 pm

Two years of audited financial statements

 Montgomery WV 2019 Audit .pdf
Uploaded by Allison Smith on Sep 22, 2021 at 3:17 pm

Current operating budget


Copy of Copy of Municipal Levy Estimate -
Budget Document 2021-2022 dual county
(003).xlsx
Uploaded by Allison Smith on Sep 22, 2021 at 3:35 pm

If the applicant has not been audited, please include an unaudited balance sheet and income statement as prepared by the applicant

 Uploaded by ... on

7. List any federal, state, local or private grant awards or funding received in the last three years and the current status of those funds. If your organization has previously received funds from Kanawha County, please list the amount, nature of the project(s) and current status of the funding and project(s).

- 50k from USDA for Community Center kitchen upgrade (\$23,583.13 has been reimbursed to the city)
- 50k from USDA for a packer (spent)
- 10k per year from Kanawha County's Public Safety Grant (spent); 2021 application pending
- 100k from Land Water Conservation Fund for Fishing Pier (15k spent)
- The WV Community Development Hub: \$20k for community development projects (spent)

8. If you have made an application for funding for this project from other sources (city, state, private or non-profit organizations) please list the same here.

N/A

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Please explain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it relates to your request.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for broadband was never greater. Many employees found themselves working from home, and students and teachers worked hard to transition to virtual learning. During this time, area outages caused by natural event, overcrowding of "shared" internet connection, and unexpected outages caused chaos for the work-from-home industry in our area during these occurrences. Additionally, the incumbent ISP (Altice USA dba Suddenlink Communications) provided slow resolution times for the issues citizens faced. In the future, we hope to offer an affordable alternative from traditional providers in the area, and installing a core broadband backbone is step one of this transition.

2. How will ARP funding, if awarded, aid in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Implementing core broadband in Montgomery has the potential to shift our city's future. We feel that the unprecedented amount of funding available should be used for innovative projects that impact communities for decades to come; implementing Phase 1 of Montgomery's broadband initiative would serve residents and visitors with the high-speed internet that they need to stay connected in the 21st century. Furthermore, as recent COVID-19 cases continue to rise, the need for reliable service persists. We are not yet out of the pandemic, but broadband expansion would assist Montgomery in moving forward.

3. Are you requesting lost revenue due to COVID-19

No

Supplementary Information

1. Please enter contact information (name, email, and phone) for at least one third-party reference.

Upper Kanawha Valley Economic Development Corporation; Thomas Baker;
tbaker@montgomerywv.gov; 304-838-2674

2. Please include any supplementary information or documentation (such as letters of support, newspaper articles, etc) which you feel will be essential to the County's review.



Uploaded by ... on

Attachments



Montgomery WV 2020 Audit.zip

Uploaded by Allison Smith on Sep 22, 2021 at 3:46 pm



2018.10.07.Chapter 1 Introduction.pub.pdf

Uploaded by Allison Smith on Sep 22, 2021 at 3:47 pm